THE GARDEN CLUB
of AMERICA

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Two thousand and twelve was an exciting and successful year for The Garden Club of America. In a constantly changing world, we remained focused on preparing for the upcoming Centennial Year, and building upon GCA's strategic priorities. The 2011 October Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Centennial Founders Fund Central Park Project was a momentous occasion attended by club members from around the country and celebrated at a gala dinner with Author and Historian William Seale, author of *The Garden Club of America 1913-2013: A Growing Legacy.*

We also welcomed an incoming Board of Directors and revised as needed our Strategic Plan. In 2012, we built a variety of important partnerships with other organizations that will have a lasting and positive impact; and we renewed our formal partnership with the National Park Service – an alliance based on conservation and management of native plants that has existed since the NPS was established.

In anticipation of the upcoming 100th anniversary of the founding of The Garden Club of America in 1913, we acknowledged that we were at a pivotal stage in the evolution of 21st century technology. We began the process of restructuring our website, which now more appropriately articulates our aspiration to keep our members, as well as the general public, informed of gardening, conservation, and other GCA activities in the most current and educational way. We constantly strive to improve what we do in a more efficient and sustainable method, therefore all organizational material is now available on the website. With the advent of a monthly GCA eNews, club members are kept up to date with all facets of the organization. The fifteen clubs that compose Zone VIII planned and executed an outstanding April 2012 Annual Meeting in Savannah, Georgia, *"A Southern Exposure"*. The Meeting culminated with an Awards Dinner, where distinguished national medalists were honored. In June of 2012, a Search Committee was organized to identify, and have in place by fall 2012, GCA's first Chief Operating Officer.

Our clubs have continued to invest in the activities that have defined the GCA since its founding. The 2012 Annual Report describes how we fulfill our mission

> ***to stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening; to share the advantages of association by means of educational meetings, conferences, correspondence, and publications; and to restore, improve, and protect the quality of the environment through educational programs and action in the fields of conservation and civic improvement.***

Our club members are involved in a wide array of efforts that support and further this mission — from the promotion of sustainable agriculture and seed diversity to planting vegetable gardens with urban school children, from indexing endangered plants in our national park system to documenting and recording historically significant American gardens, from keeping current on local and national activity in environmental legislation to encouraging research and field work through scholarship awards — GCA club members make a positive impact on the communities in which they live and work.

We take great pride in the knowledge of our impact through our community outreach programs, and through the wide variety of civic projects undertaken by our 200 member clubs and their 18,000 members; many of whom are currently engaged in Centennial Tree Planting Projects. During 2012, our country experienced another year of an economic downturn that has been unparalleled in most of our lifetimes. As has been the tradition throughout our history, The Garden Club of America prevailed in this time of crisis and found ways to become even stronger. This report showcases the year's accomplishments. In all we do, we work toward a common agenda of excellence. Our successes stand as a testament to the strength of our member clubs, the breadth of our reach as a preeminent gardening organization, and the innovative spirit of our club members.

Our accomplishments would not have been possible without our invaluable staff, strong national leadership, passionate club members, and variety of community partners who share the vision of the GCA as a vital community force.

Marian W. Hill, GCA President, 2011-2013

COUNTDOWN TO THE CENTENNIAL

GCA's **Centennial Committee** is a group of GCA club members from around the country who are coordinating the many events and activities that will culminate in the 2013 celebration of the GCA centennial anniversary. During 2011-2012, the committee worked closely with the **Communications Committee** on developing ways to share the quantity of information various committees and clubs were collecting and creating that related to preparations for the centennial. They used the GCA website and publications such as the *Bulletin* and *eNews* to provide progress updates on the countdown.

One of the anniversary initiatives, the **Centennial Tree Project**, is the brainchild of GCA's Horticulture Committee. Launched in 2008, it is a way for all member clubs to express the longevity, vitality and continuity of GCA by designing projects that will 'educate, propagate & celebrate'. During 2011-2012, clubs around the country continued implementation of their CTP projects:

- In Zone III, Lake and Valley GC of Cooperstown selected trees for their centennial tree project by looking to the oldest members of their community...tree community that is! Once they identified the oldest tree they propagated seedlings in 2009 and planted trees in the spring of 2010. In the fall of the same year they held two workshops that resulted in 38 trees including walnuts, ginkgoes and oaks. This spring they distributed the trees to Cooperstown residents at a local farmers market.
- Shaker Lakes GC members within Zone X worked on three tree projects simultaneously: the first two projects were tree donations to non-profit organizations including Green Corps, an urban work/study program founded by Cleveland Botanic Garden and Chagrin Falls Park Community Services, a community garden in northeast Ohio. The third project, begun in 2009, was planting and growing 6 different trees from seeds. The seedlings were planted in 2011-2012.
- In Zone II, the GC of New Haven's CTP project includes collecting seeds and seedlings from beneath two local naturally disease-resistant American elms, purchasing 300 disease resistant Jefferson American elms, and raising these seeds and seedlings in "foster homes," to be donated to various groups within New Haven. Locations will be GPS-mapped. Also in Zone II, South County GC of Rhode Island is collaborating with the American Chestnut Foundation and several local groups to plant an orchard of trees, starting with 320 nuts, to be transplanted in 7 to 10 years into the forests of Rhode Island. It is served by a newly installed solar powered irrigation system.
- The Fauquier and Loudoun GC in Zone VII planted 19 trees native to the Virginia Piedmont at their Historic Four Arch Stone Bridge property. Members participated in the planting and watering and built fencing for deer protection. Guests will enjoy successive bloom and leaf color through four seasons. As the trees mature they will provide an enhanced environment for wildlife.
- The Village Garden Club of Sewickley in Zone V adopted planning and promoting the restoration of the American Chestnut for their Centennial Tree Project. This tree was once the backbone of tree ecology, accounting for approximately 25% of deciduous trees in the area, before being decimated by the chestnut blight. The restoration project was hosted by Sewickley Heights Borough Park and included planting 300 potentially blight-resistant trees on three acres of land. Another 200 earlier crosses were added as controls. The trees are the product of 30 years of cross-breeding and backcrossing with the most blight-resistant trees. The effort will result in a better, more viable forest for generations to come.

- In Zone IX, the Knoxville Garden Club was an official sponsor and partnered with the Dogwood Arts Bazillion Blooms, a tree-planting program designed to restore dogwoods to their former vitality in Knox and surrounding counties. The Bazillion Blooms Project with the help of the KGC has educated the community on which dogwood cultivars are disease resistant and when and how to plant and care for the trees. KGC proved funding, education, planting days, advertisement as well as planting tress at the historic Blount Mansion. Bazillion Blooms resulted in 4000 dogwoods planted.
- In Zone IV, the Garden Club of Princeton began its Centennial Tree project by studying native trees suitable for urban environments. After reading Douglas Tallamy's *Bringing Nature Home* and inviting a local arborist to speak to the club, Ulmus americana 'Princeton' was chosen to plant in the town center. The club also propagated by seed the indigenous Quercus alba, colloquially referred to as the 'Mercer Oak,' purported to have sheltered General Mercer when he was killed during the Revolutionary War.
- Zone XI, the Cedar Rapids Garden Club partnered with the Indian Creek Nature Center to plant over 300 flood tolerant tree species. This was used as an educational opportunity in response to the 2008 500-year flood disaster when thousands of trees were lost.
- The Carolina Foothills Garden Club of Zone VIII is partnering with TreesGreenville, the City of Greenville Tree Foundation and other nonprofit groups, to "Keeping the Green in Greenville". The CFGC has contributed $10,000 in matching grant funds to underwrite TreesGreenville's NeighborWoods program, a community tree planting effort which offers free trees to residents in affordable housing neighborhoods, as well as volunteer assistance in planting and free workshops on tree planting and care. With our support, TreesGreenville and CFGC have now planted more than 400 trees for shade, flowers and fruit.

On October 5, 2011, GCA club members from Honolulu to the Hamptons and from Halifax Country to Huntingdon Valley, gathered in Central Park to celebrate the groundbreaking of the 2013 Founders Fund Project. In the words of Ray Thompson, Centennial Committee Chair, the project was supported by all 200 GCA member clubs and "represents well the core values of the GCA Purpose." Working with the Central Park Conservancy, the project is an entire renovation of the two-acre East 69th Street Entrance to Central Park – America's most visited – back to the original vision of its designers, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. During 2011-2012 the committee worked closely with the Founders Fund Committee on planning the official dedication of the project in June of 2013. The Founders Fund Committee also continued planning a gala dinner to commemorate the park dedication and GCA's anniversary: all GCA club members are invited to New York to celebrate these historic events.

THE PURPOSE OF THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA

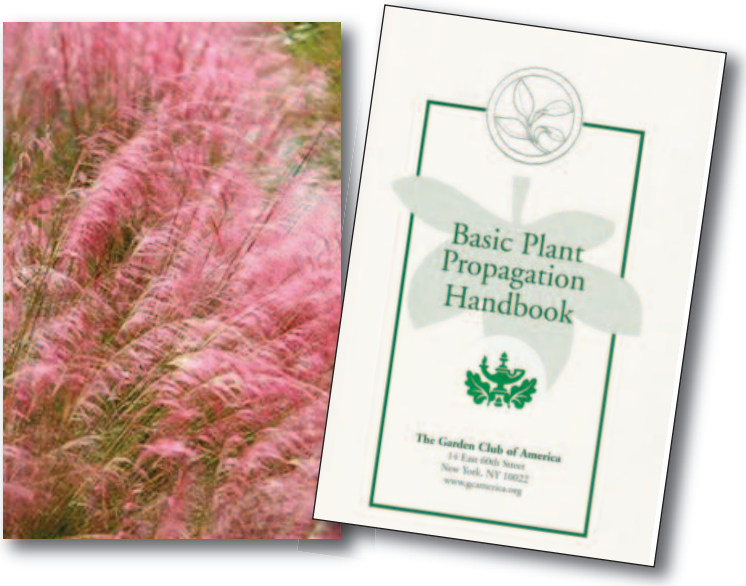
…TO STIMULATE THE KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE OF GARDENING;

TO SHARE THE ADVANTAGES OF ASSOCIATION BY MEANS OF EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, CORRESPONDENCE, AND PUBLICATIONS;

AND TO RESTORE, IMPROVE, AND PROTECT THE QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACTION IN THE FIELDS OF CONSERVATION AND CIVIC IMPROVEMENT…

Mrs. J. Willis Martin was the first President of the Garden Club of America. She united the 12 founding clubs 99 years ago and exhorted us to 'increase our usefulness in the cause of good gardening.'

…TO STIMULATE THE LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE OF GARDENING…



Charged by President Marian Hill to 'put the 'garden' back in The Garden Club of America' the 2011-2012 **Horticulture Committee** did just that by reaffirming its commitment to signature initiatives including Partners for Plants, Seed Share, the Freeman Medal Plant of the Year Award, *The Real Dirt* and the Shirley Meneice Horticulture Conference. A key accomplishment of the committee this year was the updating and reissuance of the highly popular *Basic Plant Propagation* handbooks: *Sowing Seeds* and *Vegetative Propagation*. The initial printing of 2,000 copies sold out within months! Highlighting the Freeman Medal at the GCA Annual Meeting in Savannah was also a great success and will serve as a model for subsequent Hort exhibits.

The Flower Show Committee promotes flowers shows throughout GCA and provides guidance and encouragement to those planning and presenting a show. GCA flower shows combine artistic vision, horticultural mastery, engineering and sophisticated craftsmanship to create a brief but brilliant display of beauty in time.The purpose of the committee is three-fold:

- To set standards of artistic and horticultural excellence.
- To broaden knowledge of horticulture, flower arrangement, photography and conservation.
- To share the beauty of a flower show with club members and the public.

To support these efforts, the Photography and Flower Arranging Study Groups hold workshops and issue publications that educate and share the ways and means of these artistic disciplines.

Originally focused on traditional flower arranging, flower shows now include not only floral design but also horticulture, photography, botanical jewelry, native plants and garden history and design. In 2011-2012, GCA clubs held over 175 flower shows at the national, zone and club level, including 47 GCA flower shows, 8 zone flower shows and 3 major flower shows.

Over one thousand judges around the country maintain and promote the standards of excellence in these flower shows. It is the job of the **Judging Committee** to ensure that standards are set and maintained consistently throughout the various flower show disciplines. Recognizing achievement through a system of carefully designed and administered flower show awards is a key part of the judging program. Annual workshops ensure training and professional development for prospective and established judges.

A key accomplishment of the Judging and Flower Show committees during the 2011-2012 year was launching the new on-line version of the Flower Show and Judging Guide, *The Yellow Book*, the 'Bible' on how to plan, prepare and execute a flower show.

In 2011-2012, the **Visiting Gardens Committee** revised its mission statement to include an all-important clause on education, thereby reaffirming one of the key purposes of GCA. Visiting Gardens…"plans trips both in the United States and abroad to educate member of GCA clubs in garden history and design, horticulture, and the environment. The committee also facilitates club member visits to the gardens of other GCA club members throughout the United States as well as the gardens of GCA international courtesy clubs."

The committee hosted two domestic trips with a total of 49 travelers plus an international trip with 57 participants:

- The Wilderness Wonders of Alaska took place in July, 2011. Travelers were transported by boat from Juneau to Sitka and explored the region's wildlife, history, terrain and glacial landscape.

- In April, 2012, travelers were treated to public and private estates and gardens throughout the Eastern Shore of the Charming Chesapeake. Included in this trip was a guided tour by noted horticulturalist Joanne Effinger of the Wetlands at The Inn at Perry, visits to Chino Farm, Wye House, Canterbury Manor and the William Paca House and Gardens.
- In June of 2012, Cotswolds Celebration began with an exploration of London with a visit to the Chelsea Physic Garden, Queen Mary's Rose Garden and the historic Garden Museum. This was followed by a coach trip to the countryside with visits to Towersley Manor, Arderley Grange, Eastleach Manor, Broughton Castel, Kiftsgate Court, and ultimately concluding with a visit to The Manor Bledlow.

The committee planned trips to Sicily, Palm Beach and North Carolina for the 2012-2013 season.

...TO SHARE THE ADVANTAGES OF ASSOCIATION...

GCA is fortunate to have its headquarters office in New York City in a lovely pre-War building centrally located near Fifth Avenue and Central Park. Two GCA committees, House and Hospitality, are tasked with maintaining the space and welcoming members for meetings, workshops and tours. The Library Committee curates GCA's comprehensive collection of books and manuscripts and Archives works with GCA clubs to preserve the rich histories that comprise GCA's institutional memory.

- In addition to its usual duties of decorating HQ for meetings and visitors, the **House Committee** also completed a detailed inventory, with photographs, of the artwork, antiques and design objects that beautify the rooms and hallways of HQ.
- GCA's **Hospitality Committee** offers meals and refreshments for visiting club members and committee business meetings. The GCA Café was busy this year serving a variety of delicious luncheons, teas and dinners, many thoughtfully prepared by committee members themselves and others provided by local caterers.
- In preparation for GCA's centennial in 2013, the **Library Committee** continued its elaborate planning for a public exhibition at The Grolier Club in New York City of highlights from GCA's Rare Book Collection. The entire collection, meant to be studied as well as admired, has been compiled from donations and purchases made over the past 100 years. The committee is considering which of the nearly 500 volumes will be included in the exhibit. The committee also initiated two new features in GCA publications in order to share the treasures of GCA with all club members: Leafing Through was added to *Bulletin* and Off the Shelf was added to *eNews*.
- GCA's **Archives Committee** and the GCA Historian spent most of the year researching and organizing the archives – working with members on their club histories and helping national committee chairmen in the organization-wide preparation for GCA's centennial in 2013.

GCA club members not only benefit from the advantages of a strong and active national organization but also from the partnerships that GCA has developed and maintains with other like-minded groups within the environmental, educational and horticultural arenas. Initiatives like such as the Horticulture Committee's Partners for Plants program, the Garden History and Design Committee and the Scholarship Committee all work with outside organizations that strengthen the reach and impact of GCA's work.

Partners for Plants, a joint initiative of the Conservation and Horticulture Committees, serves as a model for all GCA clubs who want to maximize the impact of partnerships within their communities. P4P provides a blueprint for developing hands-on, grassroots projects that focus on threatened or endangered plants, invasives, exotics and medical plants that exist on federal, state or other significant public lands including those managed by the National Park Service, the US Forest Service, the US Department of Agriculture, states and cities. GCA club members initiate the partnership, work with the partner to identify needs, propose the project to the P4P committee, provide the volunteer hours necessary to implement and complete the project, and report on the project's status on a regular basis to the committee.

During 2011-2012, member clubs participated in 29 **Partners for Plants** projects throughout the country of which 3 were new: Jockey Hollow State Park, NJ with the Garden Club of Morristown; the Parklands of Floyds Fork, KY with the Glenview Garden Club; and Griffith Park, CA with the Hancock Park Garden Club. Ongoing P4P projects included:

- Acadia National Park, ME – GC of Mount Desert
- Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, RI – Perennial Planters
- South Mountain Reservation, NJ – Short Hills GC
- Sewickley Heights Borough Park, PA – Village GC
- Wissahickon Valley Park, PA – GC of Philadelphia
- Congaree NP, SC – Palmetto GC
- Pine Jog Environmental Center, FL – GC of Palm Beach
- Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, TX – Magnolia GC
- Germantown Road Right of Way (Riverwoods State Natural Area), TN – Memphis GC
- Cheekwood Botanic Garden and Percy Warner Park, TN – GC of Nashville
- Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, TX – River Oaks GC
- Big Thicket National Preserve, TX – Magnolia GC
- Legacy Parks, Knoxvillle, TN – GC of Knoxville
- Cuyahoga Valley NP, OH – Akron GC
- Neal Smith NWF, IA – Des Moines Founders
- Wolsfeld Woods, MN – Lake Minnetonka
- Jerry Smith Park and Saeger Woods Conservation Area, MO - Westport GC in partnership with KC Wildlands
- Chicago Botanic Garden Holdings, IL – Lake Forest
- Bodie Hills, CA – Ridgefield
- Gaviota State Park, CA (Santa Barbara County) – GC of Santa Barbara
- John B. Yeon State Park, OR – Portland GC
- Montlake Cut, WA (Army Corps of Engineers) – Seattle GC
- Pike and San Isabel NF, CO – Broadmoor GC
- Landels – Hill Big Creek Reserve – Carmel by the-Sea GC
- Edgewood County Park – Redwood City, CA – Hillsborough GC
- Hoyt Arboretum, Portland Parks Bureau, OR – The Portland GC

GCA's Garden History & Design Committee is an unsung hero of the organization: working to preserve the history of gardening in America through the identification and documentation of private and public gardens throughout the United States. In partnership with the Archives of American Gardens at the Smithsonian Institution, GCA club members researched and documented 53 new historic gardens in 2011-2012, adding to the Smithsonian's collection housed in their Horticulture Services Division. The core of this national archive is the unique slide library of Notable American Parks and Gardens: nearly 3000 hand-colored glass lantern slides dating from the 1920's and 1930's donated by GCA. 2012 marks the 25th anniversary of this landmark donation that has grown to contain more than 80,000 photographic images and records of almost 6500 historic and contemporary American gardens.

The GHD Committee also worked with the Flower Show and Judging committees in 2011-2012 to establish standards for entries of historic preservation exhibits in flower shows. Guidelines established by the committee were included in the *Flower Show & Judging Guide* and a workshop was held at the Smithsonian demonstrating how exhibits can be created to increase local awareness of the need to preserve historic records of the American garden.

Another GCA committee that works closely with outside organizations is GCA's **Scholarship Committee.** In 2011-2012, 74 GCA scholarships worth $263,700 were awarded to students in endeavors related to horticulture and the environment, and ranging from desert studies to tropical botany. Many of our scholars are identified by educational and horticultural institutions around the country that work with GCA to administer the scholarships. Student scholars are often called upon to speak at GCA club meetings and symposia, enthusiastically sharing the results of their fieldwork with appreciative GCA club members.

In the fall of 2011 the committee welcomed Alex Summers as its first GCA/RHS Interchange Fellow to participate in Longwood Garden's International Internship program, a non-academic, practical working opportunity. This is the first time that GCA's partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society has offered Longwood's program as an option for its Interchange Fellows. Alex, along with Doug Needham, Longwood's Education Department Head, spoke about the program to GCA national leadership in March of 2012.

GCA was pleased to partner with the following organizations in 2011-2012 to administer and award GCA Scholarships:

- American Academy in Rome (AAR)—The Garden Club of America Rome Prize in Landscape Architecture
- Center for Plant Conservation (CPC)—The Catherine H. Beattie Fellowship in Conservation Horticulture
- College of William & Mary, Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), Center for Coastal Resources Management—The GCA Award in Coastal Wetlands Studies
- Cornell University, Cornell Lab of Ornithology—The Frances M. Peacock Scholarship for Native Bird Habitat
- Desert Botanical Garden—The GCA Award in Desert Studies
- Landscape Architecture Foundation (LAF), Leadership in Landscape Scholarship Program—The Douglas Dockery Thomas Fellowship in Garden History and Design
- Missouri Botanical Garden, William L. Brown Center—The Anne S. Chatham Fellowship in Medicinal Botany
- Royal Horticultural Society (RHS)—Garden Club of America/Royal Horticultural Society Interchange Fellowship
- Smithsonian Institution, Smithsonian Gardens, Archives of American Gardens (AAG)—The GCA Internship in Garden History and Design
- Student Conservation Association (SCA)—The Sara Shallenberger Brown GCA National Parks Conservation Scholarship
- University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum—The GCA Fellowship in Ecological Restoration
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation—The GCA Zone VI Fellowship in Urban Forestry
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Education for Nature Program—The GCA Awards in Tropical Botany

"Ongoing friendships with scholars make GCA's scholarship program unique. One example is Ian Wale, the 2005 GCA Interchange Fellow, who attended the University of Massachusetts' graduate program in landscape architecture. In September, 2011, Ian emailed an inquiry to our website, which he describes as "Fantastic…well done"! He had learned that he was a finalist in the Nashville (Tennessee) Civic Design Center's international ideas competition and his submission would continue through to an outdoor public exhibition. Would a member of the Garden Club of Nashville represent him at the opening reception? Their scholarship chairman was pleased to attend. In October Ian visited New York City. His firm was competing for the job of London's version of the "High Line" and he dearly wanted to attend a sold-out tour of the High Line's unfinished third section. We asked Robert Hammond, 2009 GCA Rome Prize Fellow and co-founder of the High Line, for help. With Robert's assistance, Ian made the tour and raved about the experience. He also squeezed in a tour of GCA Headquarters…I'd like to close with Ian's own words: 'What a place! Amazing! [An] incredible collection of books, photographs, and artwork… It was quite eye-opening for me to see the breadth of the GCA's work and influence. I didn't fully appreciate what an important role it plays in improving environments and peoples' lives as a result. I look forward to repaying you at some point. Congratulations on your centenary year in 2013!'"

…Laurie Davis, Scholarship Committee Chair

One of the Scholarship Committee's most enjoyable responsibilities is awarding the annual Elisabeth Abernathy Hull Awards to deserving individuals who provide outstanding environmental education for youths under 16 years of age. GCA is most proud to honor the following 2011-2012 Hull award winners:

- Pam Sloane from Greenwich, CT - Proposed by Elizabeth Roberts, Stamford Garden Club, Zone II. A new Master Gardener, Pam believes gardens are meant to enrich mind, body and spirit. As a teacher at Stamford Middle School, she created an informal Garden Club. Upon retirement in 2009, Pam created G.I.V.E., the Green Initiative for Vegetables in Education. Funded by Ridgefield GC (CT), Zone II
- Christine Zeppenfeld from Trenton, NJ - Proposed by Leslie V. Kuenne, Stony Brook Garden Club, Zone IV. Christine is the "Learning through Landscapes" teacher at the Princeton Junior School in Lawrenceville, NJ. Under her leadership, the school's program has grown to be a distinctive environmental approach to learning. Funded by Millbrook GC (NY), Zone III
- Robert L. Mardiney from Owings Mills, MD - Proposed by Maxine Hoen, Green Spring Valley Garden Club, Zone VI. Robert is an environmental teacher at Irvine Nature Center in Baltimore County, Maryland. For the past 27 years he has served as Director of Education of the Irvine Nature Center.
- Sarah Jane Spiers from Decatur, GA - Proposed by Kathryn McCain Lee, Cherokee Garden Club, Zone VIII. Sarah teaches K-third grade science at The Lovett School in Atlanta, GA. After she reclaimed an empty greenhouse, students began planting and growing seeds. She leads the planning of Earth Week activities and participates in Heifer International's "Read to Feed" program.
- Sandy Livermore from Sheboygan, WI - Proposed by Nancy Moulton, Town and Country Garden Club, Zone XI. Sandy was the visionary and driving force behind the creation of Bookworm Gardens, a landscaped garden based on children's literature in Sheboygan, Wisconsin that opened in 2010.
- Stephen P. Zwolak from St. Louis, MO - Proposed by Frances Gay and Tara Lewis, Ladue Garden Club, Zone XI. At the University City Children's Center in St. Louis, Missouri, a non-profit, inner-city school for 130 young children, ages six weeks to kindergarten, Steve designed an innovative curriculum, Seed to Table, to use the outdoors to develop young minds. A major part of his outdoor learning approach is based on the school's garden.
- Leigh Talmo from Sierra Madre, CA - Proposed by Peggy Stewart, Pasadena GC, Zone XII. Leigh has worked with elementary-aged school child-ren since 1994 at The Arboretum of Los Angeles County. Her "Roots and Shoots" program brings a designated classroom of children to The Arboretum 14 to 17 times over the course of the school year.

...BY MEANS OF EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES...

GCA continued its legacy of informing and educating its club members through a variety of symposia and meetings, some focused on areas of specific interest and others with a more general agenda. All were well attended and well received, both entertaining and empowering, inspiring and informative. From the islands of Hawaii to the riverbanks of Savannah, GCA club members met to pursue their passions and share their love of gardening.

This year the Shirley Meniece Horticulture Conference, "Past and Future", went back to the site of its first meeting 9 years ago to the Huntington Botanical Gardens in Pasadena, CA. The conference, an initiative of the GCA **Horticulture Committee,** was designed to educate horticultural leaders in GCA member clubs through speakers, workshops and garden tours. Featured lecturers at the 2011 conference included Rosalind Creasy who spoke about adding edibles to

"…it is said in evolutionary terms that 'strange things happen on islands', for members of the Con and NAL committees in the 2011 GCA field study strip, strange meant extraordinary!"
Sarah Young, Broadmoor Garden Club, Zone XII

…it's up to each of us to stand up and be heard, to write letters, to lobby, to march, to organize, to vote. Don't be content to just sit back and watch. Women, such as the delegates to the annual GCA NAL conferences, can make the difference…"
Elva Busch, Plainfield Garden Club, Zone IV and Santa Fe Garden Club, Zone XII

"We must always work toward further strengthening the performance of The Garden Club of America….and continue building upon the establishment of its position as one of the leading group of gardening organizations that shape our world…"
Marian Hill, GCA President, 2011-2013

our landscapes; Gary Jones, who taught us about volume and shape in our gardens; Bart O'Brien who told us about California native plants; Corey Wells who spoke about soil and the importance of composting; Richard Schulhof who talked to the future of gardening and sustainable horticulture; and finally, Debra Lee Baldwin who shared her passion for succulents. Tours of the Huntington and Descano Gardens highlighted this popular and informative conference.

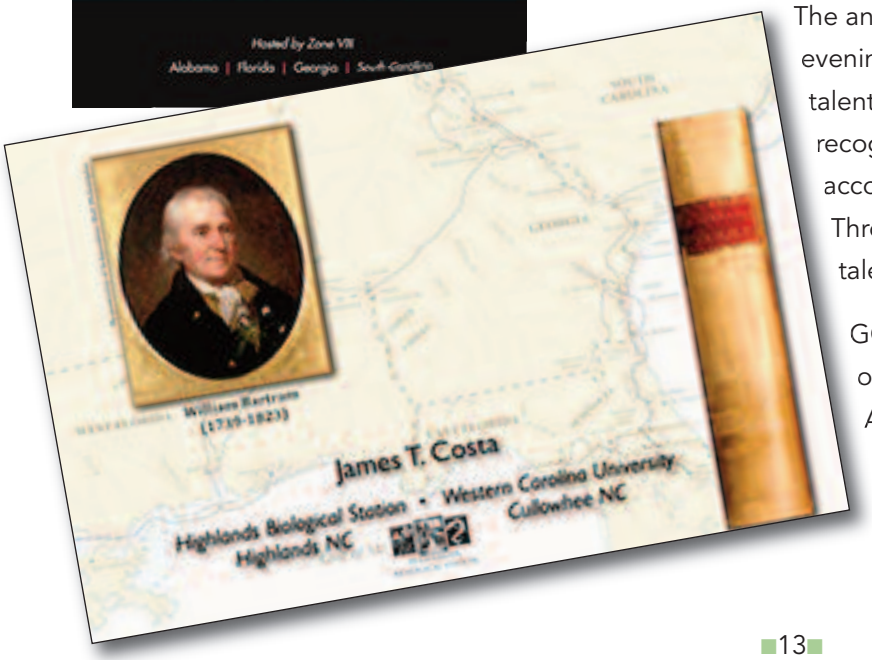
In the fall of 2011, the Garden Club of Honolulu graciously hosted members of the **Conservation and National Affairs & Legislation Committee**s at their annual field study trip. Attendees studied national conservation issues with particular resonance on the islands of Hawaii including ocean protection, sea level rise, the challenge of alternative energy, food safety, fisheries, GMO's and organics, tissue culture for seed propagation, rough terrain botany and the scourge of invasive species. Attendees were also treated to magical landscape tours that both merged island and mainland environments and underscored their differences. Local guides transported committee members to an ancient place to learn lessons for the future.

The members of the **National Affairs & Legislation and Conservation Committees** gather again every February in Washington, DC; this time joined by delegates from GCA member clubs to meet with congressional leaders and discuss environmental issues of mutual concern. Elected national officials from both sides of the aisle, government administrators and environmental lobbyists are among the featured speakers at this 4-day meeting. Four of the most dynamic speakers at the 2012 meeting included Senators Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Senators Susan Collins and Olympia Snow, both Republicans from Maine: all were well informed and fully prepared for their GCA audience – and all spoke of their belief that women in elected office are role models for children and for the women of America.

Almost 300 GCA club members representing 150 GCA clubs from Hawaii to New York, and from Maine to Florida attended this year's meeting. Attendees were treated to a private tour of Hillwood Museum and discussed major legislative initiatives including the Restore Act, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Farm Bill and various conservation regulations.

The **Annual Meeting Committee** presented "A Southern Exposure", co-chaired by Jenny Lynn Bradley of Trustee's Garden Club, Joan Haskell of Late Bloomers Garden Club and Lynn Mays of Sand Hills Garden Club. Over 600 club presidents, delegates and national officers attended this dynamic and comprehensive 3-day meeting in the gracious southern city of Savannah, GA.

The 15 Zone VIII clubs in Alabama, Florida, Georgia and South Carolina who hosted the meeting were: Carolina Foothills Garden Club, Cherokee Garden Club, Founders Garden Club of Sarasota, Garden Club of Palm Beach, The Garden Club of the Halifax Country, The Grass River Garden Club, Junior Ladies' Garden Club, Jupiter Island Garden Club, Late Bloomers Garden Club, Little Garden Club of Birmingham, The Palmetto Garden Club of South Carolina, Peachtree Garden Club, Red Mountain Garden Club, Sand Hills Garden Club, and Trustees' Garden Club.



The annual Awards Dinner that takes place on the last evening of the annual meeting is a gala celebration of talent and effort. It is the time and place where GCA recognizes both members and non-members whose accomplishments and efforts further the GCA mission. Through various philanthropies, GCA encourages new talent and rewards achievements of mutual interest.

GCA recognized 10 outstanding individuals and organizations with national medals in 2012. Administered by GCA's **Awards Committee,** the following medalists were honored at GCA's 2012 Annual Meeting:

- The Sarah Chapman Francis Medal for outstanding literary achievement was presented to the Garden Club of Mount Desert, Friends of Acadia and the Maine Natural History Observatory for creating a field guide to the 2,000+ plant species in Acadia National Park.
- The Elizabeth Craig Weaver Proctor Medal was awarded to Dr. Wes Jackson for his dedication and vision in helping to develop a perennial polyculture to benefit future generations and protect the health of our planet.
- Past GCA president, Jan Offutt Pratt, was awarded the prestigious GCA Achievement Medal in recognition of her extraordinary leadership and horticultural achievement at both the local and national levels of our organization.
- The Cynthia Pratt Laughlin Medal was awarded to Rossie and Sandy Fisher for their lifelong dedication to environmental stewardship as pioneers in the field of organic and sustainable farming through their work at Brookview Farm.
- The Frances K. Hutchinson Medal was awarded to Charles Glover Lane for his extraordinary commitment to conservation and preservation, especially his leadership in preserving the ACE Basin in Low Country South Carolina for future generations.
- Mark Buscaino, Executive Director of GCA partner Casey Trees, was awarded the Margaret Douglas Medal for his outstanding dedication to conservation education and for his role as a practical visionary in the field of urban forestry.
- The Katharine Thomas Cary Medal, awarded for outstanding achievement in flower arranging education, was presented to Bonnylin Martin, Memphis Garden Club, Zone IX for the excellence of her exhibiting, writing, judging, mentoring and leadership.
- Patricia T. Henry and William M. Patterson of Roses Unlimited were awarded the Jane Righter Rose Medal for conserving Old Garden Roses through propagation, educational service nationwide and their deep passion and devotion for growing.
- GCA's Historic Preservation Medal was awarded to The Garden Conservancy for its outstanding achievement in preserving exceptional American gardens as integral elements of our national artistic and cultural heritage.
- The City of Chattanooga & 21st Century Waterfront Project was awarded the Elvira Broome Doolan Medal for enriching the lives of Chattanooga's citizens and visitors with innovative landscape architecture, city planning and civic improvements.

"Zone VI is proud to announce an update on their 2012 Founders Fund winner: construction of the "Living Classroom" is complete! See this successful club/ community partnership in action in a video, Little Green Thumbs, created by BWS Kindergarten teacher, Bruce Holmes. It shows the students and faculty engaged in creative field trips, art classes, vegetable gardening, cooking and even fundraising: http://www.bishopwalkerschool.org/article/118/admission/green-learning-at-bws/bws-little-green-thumbs

The following two runners up received grants of $7,500:

- Serenity Park: A Healing Oasis at Gateway Community Center, Jacksonville, FL. Proposed by the Late Bloomers Garden Club Zone VIII and seconded by Cherokee Garden Club, Zone VIII
- Living Learning Roof: The Green Roof Educational Project, Cedar Rapids, IA. Proposed by Cedar Rapids Garden Club, Zone XI and seconded by the Garden Club of Barrington, Zone XI

The Founders Fund Award is a monetary gift given to a club-sponsored project that undergoes a rigorous and thorough proposal process. Granted annually since 1936 by the Founders Fund Committee, it is the only GCA award that is voted on by the entire GCA club membership.

In 2012, GCA club members awarded $25,000 to "Growing Minds and Spirits," a project for the Bishop John T. Walker School (Anacostia) in Washington, DC. In a harsh urban environment, one cannot predict the future for an inner-city child; statistics are disturbing. In 2008, Perennial Garden Club (PGC), Zone VI, launched a six-year partnership with the Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys (BWS) in Anacostia, Washington, DC — a tuition-free, elementary school committed to a strong, values-based education for boys growing up in the precarious shadow of the U.S. Capitol — with intentions to reverse expectations. PGC designed an educational landscape introducing children to the natural world and the importance of caring for nature's gifts.

The 2012 Founders Fund award will enable PGC to build the Living Classroom, providing spaces and tools to integrate school curriculum with nature and to nurture future stewards of the environment as they reap the rewards of beauty, flowers, food and wildlife. How will the Living Classroom touch the life of each boy? Will gathering water from rain barrels or growing their own vegetables rouse wonder? Will the green roof on the potting shed beckon understanding of how storm water harms the Anacostia River? Will digging in the worm pit, feeling the softness of Stachys byzantia or painting at in-ground easels inspire? Will watching butterflies, checking the weather station, peeking in birdhouses or sharing their flowers with a nearby senior center stir their spirits? One can only imagine how experiencing nature will serve the boys — and how this investment can make an impact.

Garden Club of America Honorary Members are men and women of distinction who have never been members of a GCA club. They are professionals with established reputations in horticulture and conservation or individuals whose knowledge and interest in the purposes of GCA make them valuable members of our organization. The GCA **Admissions Committee** administers applications and recommendations for Honorary Members.

GCA welcomed the following four new Honorary Members in 2012:

- John Tschirch, Museum Affairs Director and Architectural Historian of the Preservation Society of Newport County.
- Elvin McDonald, Director of the Des Moines Botanical Center; legendary and prolific horticulture author.
- Evelyn Moore (Patti) McGee; garden preservationist and longtime Garden Conservancy advocate.
- Michael Dirr, GCA Medal of Honor winner; horticulture legend and retired University of Georgia professor.

One of the significant initiatives of GCA's **Horticulture Committee** is administering the applications for, and choosing the winner of, the Montine McDaniel Freeman Medal. The only award given by GCA to a plant, the medal is awarded annually to acknowledge the cultivation and use of native plants: trees, shrubs, ground covers, vines, and perennials that are little known but are deemed worthy to be preserved, propagated, promoted, and planted.

The 2012 medal was awarded to Muhlenbergia capillaris, 'Pink Muhly', a versatile grass that provides year-round interest with fine foliage and exceptional fall color. Native to sandy alkaline dunes from Massachusetts to Florida and throughout the Gulf Coast, it could thrive in USDA Zones 6 and 5.

Pink Muhly was nominated by the Naples Botanical Garden and supported by the Garden Club of the Halifax Country, Zone VIII.

... BY MEANS OF CORRESPONDENCE AND PUBLICATIONS...

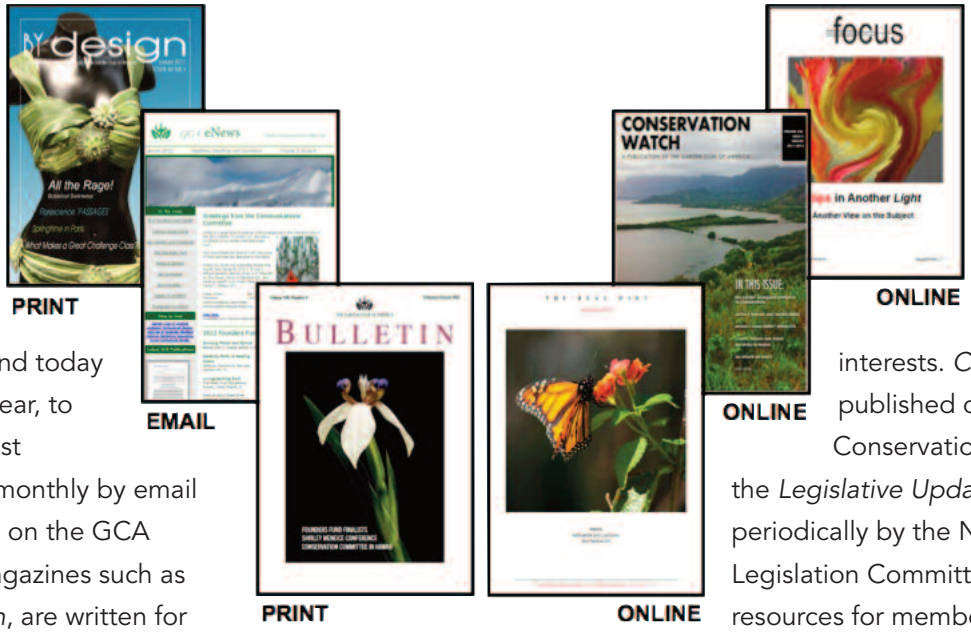
The **Communications Committee** spent 2011-2012 refining the structure, content and organization of the GCA website; working on populating and maintaining both the public and members only areas of the site as well as the membership database; and ensuring that all information required by national committees, zones and the GCA national organization is correct and correctly posted to the site. Much more than just a repository for current and historical data, the website is a dynamic, interactive resource that shares information among all levels of the [organization. In addition to the website, ComCom published nine issues of *eNews*, the monthly eblast that is used to communicate items of national interest with the entire club membership. *eNews* went from a bi-monthly to a monthly format during the 2011-2012 year and over 15,000 emails were sent for each issue.

ComCom also worked on communications policies, recommending changes and additions to the GCA Executive Committee. Zone reps helped clubs get individual members logged into the website and

committee leadership held two offsite meetings to develop website wireframe enhancements, devise strategies for ongoing site operations and facilitate membership interactions with GCA.

The new website allowed a greater capability for using online registration for many GCA events. The 2012 Annual Meeting successfully used the new registration module and registered over 600 attendees to the Savannah meeting. The enhanced module also supported many of the database needs for the various events and registration details of the meeting. In addition, since the registration process was integrated with the GCA membership database, it became possible for club members to review their GCA event history of attendance.

In the fall of 2012, the online registration module was further utilized for individual zone meetings. Between 2011 and 2012, the registration module successfully a dministered 15 GCA events.



Publications available to GCA club members range from the *Bulletin*, a glossy four-color print magazine that was first published in 1918 and today is issued 6 times a year, to *eNews*, GCA's newest publication, issued monthly by email and available online on the GCA website. Interest magazines such as *focus* and *By Design*, are written for specific interest groups (photography and floral design, respectively) within the GCA organization. Others, such as *The Real Dirt,* a quarterly online publication of the Horticulture Committee, are meant to appeal to a broader audience and contain features that appeal to a wide range of interests. *ConWatch,* published quarterly by the Conservation Committee, and the *Legislative Update,* published periodically by the National Affairs & Legislation Committee, are online resources for members interested in issues that relate to GCA's commitment to restoring, improving and protecting the quality of our natural environment.

...TO RESTORE, IMPROVE AND PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH EDUCATION & ACTION IN CONSERVATION & CIVIC IMPROVEMENT...

GCA has a long and esteemed tradition of volunteerism and civic improvement, building upon the strength of local club memberships to enhance the natural environments in which they and their families live, work and play. Through education, hands-on landscaping and garden maintenance, fundraising and advocacy, local clubs are a force for positive change within their communities – and are the backbone of the GCA organization. Consider these highlights from the 2011-2012 volunteer year:

Milton Garden Cub, Zone 1

- Garden Club of Dublin re-landscaped the village post office, Cambridge Plant & Garden Club installed a new habitat walkway at Black's Nook, Fresh Pond Reservation, and Cohasset Garden Club redesigned the entrance garden to the Lightkeeper's Cottage, overlooking Cohasset Harbor.
- The Nantucket Garden Club, Beacon Hill Garden Club and Lenox Garden Club conducted house or garden tours to raise funds for local community projects.
- Garden Club of Mt. Desert focused on the promotion and propagation of monarch butterflies through plantings in public and private gardens and raising, tagging and releasing monarchs in cages.

Fairfield Garden Club, Zone II

- The Litchfield Garden Club continues to sponsor a 6th Grade Conservation Program, involving five classroom sessions and a conservation field day, now past its 30th year.
- The Stamford Garden Club expanded its Lettuce Challenge program, coordinating with the Green Initiative for Vegetables in Education, to include elementary, middle and high school classes in public, parochial and private schools in Stamford. The final entries were judged and on display at the Government Center in Stamford.

North Shore Garden Club, Zone III

- Rusticus Garden Club engaged the public in dialogue about environmental issues by hosting its first environmental film forum, Films for Thought. In addition to offering multiple film viewings, the club organized a volunteer and student internship EXPO. More than 125 attendees participated in a conversation with one of the film-makers of YERT, Your Environmental Road Trip on the big screen via Skype following the showing of the film. Those attending the expo learned about local volunteer and internship opportunities from more than 20 local environmental and conservation organizations that showcased their projects.
- Essex County Adirondack Garden Club, which historically has focused on conservation, horticulture and education, held its first club flower show in 19 years! Reflections of the Adirondack Palette was a great success thanks to a schedule full of floral design and horticulture programs and workshops in the months prior to the show, and help from its neighbor, Fort Orange Garden Club.
- The twelve clubs comprising Zone IV took their lead from the GCA centennial celebration plans to further their commitment to long-standing conservation and civic projects, while moving forward with the establishment of "green" initiatives such as Plainfield Garden Club's entirely paperless Zone Meeting.
- The Garden Club of Trenton planted trees at their city's elementary schools.

Garden Club of Englewood, Zone IV

- The Garden Club of Somerset Hills held their hugely popular House & Garden tour to raise funds to pump back into the community.
- Over half of the clubs in Zone IV now have websites that make the business of communicating much easier.

Garden Club of Philadelphia, Zone V

- Zone VII clubs from Virginia to West Virginia to North Carolina and Kentucky served their communities in meaningful ways including projects that focused on the planting of urban trees, the installation of a wildflower meadow for a hospital in Charlottesville, the weekly upkeep of a wildflower garden and outdoor learning center in Roanoke, the creation of a museum rain garden in Newport, the maintenance of two historic garden restorations in Lexington, KY and Staunton, several public park enhancements in Charleston, WVA, Louisville, KY and Orange, the creation of bouquets for nursing home residents in Lexington, KY, and the adoption of an ancient boxwood thought to be 150 years old in Winchester.

Halten Garden Club, Zone VII

- A number of Zone VII clubs expanded their interest in photography by establishing committees and introducing programs about this highly creative and emerging art form.
- Online newsletters and websites are used more consistently to keep individual club members up to date. Photo sharing sites and meeting invitation software were also adopted by several clubs in order to enhance and facilitate interclub communications.

Dolley Madison Garden Club, Zone VII

- The Greenville Garden Club helped create a Trail Guide for the Cypress Preserve.
- The Laurel Garden Club introduced the Hoe and Hope Garden Club (which it founded in 1955 for sixth grade students) to the endangered Monarch butterfly. Plots were planted with milkweed and posters were displayed in public buildings to bring awareness to the beauty and importance of this butterfly.
- Little Rock Garden Club created a Bat Cave with excellent signage, plant life, video and literature for all ages. The exhibit is now housed with the Audubon Society for teaching purposes.
- Magnolia Garden Club, at their flower show location, worked with the property owners, and distributed *A Guide to Organic Gardening*, to convert a section of the garden to organics.
- The Monroe Garden Study League supported the Lexington Elementary School Wonderlab, an outdoor classroom with wetlands/rain gardens.
- The Gertrude Windsor Garden Club sponsored a community presentation on the history and conservation of the Neches River. Efforts are currently under way to have 216 miles of the Neches declared a National Wild and Scenic River.
- Garden Club of Nashville completed renovation of the Howe Garden at the Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Museum of Art.
- Memphis Garden Club created the Christmas decorations for the Dixon Gallery and Gardens. Year round, this club provides flower arrangements for the galleries and work in the garden.

CG of the Halifax Country, Zone VIII

- River Oaks Garden Club celebrated 50 years of stewardship of Bayou Bend Gardens and Knoxville Garden Club has maintained the gardens at Blount Mansion since 1934. Pilgrimage Garden Club maintains the antique garden roses in the historic Natchez Cemetery.

They now have over 125 healthy rose bushes in the 1822 cemetery.

- Shreveport Garden Study Club supports the Greenwood Cemetery Dell with additional tree plantings, walkways, fencing and infra-structure.

Pilgrimage Garden Club, Zone IX

- Akron Garden Club continues to support their "Partners for Plants" program with Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Stan Hywet Hall. Through the Tree Legacy Project two year old Paw Paw seedlings were propagated and disbursed.
- Country Garden Club of Perrysburg spearheaded and provided funding for the City of Perrysburg's new cardboard recycling drop-off center grand opening.
- The Garden Club of Cincinnati continued to support Habitat for Humanity and their Christmas Greens project for 150 shut-ins.
- Shaker Lakes Garden Club raised funds through their Charitable Project Fund to assist area non-profits.
- The Garden Club of Michigan celebrated 100 years on their founding date, 11-11-11.
- Indianapolis Garden Club members held a Cork Drive, partnering with Whole Foods, and collected over 8,000 corks. The corks were donated to a cork flooring business.
- Little Garden Club of Columbus celebrated their club's 50th year by giving a generous donation to Green Lawn Cemetery where 14 Ohio National Quercus species of Oak trees were planted in honor of the club's 14 founding members.
- Diggers Garden Club of Pasadena, California redesigned and planted 'water wise' natives for the entrance to their civic project, The Old Mill.
- Marin Garden Club is upgrading the Memory Garden in its community Garden Center with a redesign.
- Orinda Garden Club partnered with local merchants and neighbors, raising $25,000 for the completion of the clean up of Lake Cascade.

Bay City Garden Club, Zone X

Garden Guild of Winnetka, Zone XI

- Broadmoor Garden Club in Colorado Springs, Colorado gifted its community with a program on floral design by James L. Johnson, who entertained and challenged the 200 attendees to create beautiful arrangements with items from their closets coupled with fruits, vegetables and flowers.

Seattle Garden Club, Zone XII

- Hillsborough Garden Club launched a State Affairs and Legislation Committee (SAL) to educate members about pending legislation relating to drinking water, fracking and protection of California state parks. They hope to introduce SAL to other California garden clubs.

This Annual Report is a publication of the GCA's Communications Committee. If you note errors, please email communications@gcamerica.org